

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8639
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MONTREAL 320

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, CA, US
SUBJ: PRESS TREATMENT OF TRUDEAU TRIP

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: OVER WEEKEND TWO ARTICLES IN MONTREAL PRESS REFLECTED DIFFERENT VIEWS OF EVENTS IN WASHINGTON LAST WEEK. EDITORIAL IN PQ PARTY ORGAN LE JOUR SAW NOTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE IN CARTER-PHILLIPS INTERVIEW AND VIEWED TRUDEAU SPEECH TO CONGRESS AS RETURN TO CANADIAN SERVILITY TOWARDS U.S. IN CONTRAST, ARTICLE BY RESPECTED MONTREAL STAR COLUMNIST DOMINIQUE CLIFT TERMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S ENDORSEMENT OF CANADIAN FEDERALISM AS POSSIBLY ONE OF SEVEREST BLOWS YET TO PREMIER LEVESQUE'S PROGRAM OF INDEPENDENCE. TWO ARTICLES REPRESENT ANTIPODES OF THOSE WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE PRESS DURING LAST WEEK. WHILE LE JOUR, AS ORGAN OF PQ, CAN NOT BE TAKEN AS REPRESENTATIVE, FRANCOPHONE PRESS IN GENERAL HAS TENDED TO GIVE LESS PROMINENCE TO TRUDEAU VISIT THAN ANGLOPHONE PRESS, WITH REPORTING MORE MATTER OF FACT. IN SEPARATE ARTICLE IN MONTREAL STAR TODAY, CLIFT SUGGESTS THAT PREMIER LEVESQUE IS INTENTIONALLY DOWNPLAYING UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES CONVEYED BY PRESIDENT CARTER IN ORDER TO FORESTALL EXPRESSION OF FAIRLY PROMINENT ANTI-U.S. FEELINGS AMONG SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF PQ MEMBERSHIP. END SUMMARY
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2. OF THE FRENCH PRESS, LE JOUR, RESUSCITATED LAST MONTH AS A WEEKLY, AND SPONSORED BY PARTI-QUEBECOIS, COMES CLOSEST TO REFLECTING OFFICIAL PQ PARTY LINE. EDITORIAL IN LE JOUR OF FEBRUARY 25 IS THEREFORE INTERESTING FOR WAY IN WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER'S INTERVIEW WITH CTV REPORTER BRUCE PHILLIPS AND TRUDEAU'S SPEECH IN WASHINGTON WERE HANDLED.

3. EDITORIAL, WRITTEN BY EDITOR IN CHIEF EVELYN DUMAS, ASSERTS THAT A CAREFUL READING OF BOTH TRUDEAU'S SPEECH AND CARTER'S INTERVIEW, LEADS ONE TO QUALIFY AS "INFANTILE THE JOYS OF EXCLAMATION AND ADMIRATION THAT TRUDEAU HAS ELICITED IN PRESS, AND THE SIGHS OF RELIEF OF THOSE WHO NOW SEE THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT AS AN ALLY OF CANADIAN FEDERALISTS". REACTING TO STATEMENTS IN PRESS THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WAS ANTI-SEPARATIST, DUMAS ASSERTS THAT IT WOULD BE INDEED SURPRISING IF AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT WOULD RISK A VERBAL INTRUSION SO SPECTACULAR INTO CANADA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN REVIEWING CARTER'S WORDS, DUMAS FINDS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS SKATED A FINE LINE IN RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS POSED BY PHILLIPS, AND THAT THERE IS SURELY LITTLE THERE TO GET EXCITED ABOUT.

4. DUMAS GOES ON TO SAY THAT ONE CAN DRAW THE CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERS WOULD BE MORE INCLINED TO GET ALONG WITH LIBERAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH WOULD DEFEND THE STATUS QUO AT THE BORDER, THAN WITH A POLITICAL MOVEMENT THAT AIMS NOT ONLY AT A CHANGE IN CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE BUT ALSO AT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES THAT CONTRAST WITH THE COMFORTABLE CUSTOMS ENSCONSED IN NORTH AMERICA.

5. DUMAS ASSERTS THAT IT IS FROM THIS SAME VANTAGE POINT THAT ONE MUST INTERPRET THE "SUCCESS" OF TRUDEAU'S SPEECH TO CONGRESS. THE SMALL NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS (WHICH DUMAS PLACES AT ABOUT 150) WHO CAME TO HEAR TRUDEAU AND OTHER POLITICIANS AND DIPLOMATS COULD ONLY APPLAUD A SPEECH THAT WAS FLATTERING ALMOST TO POINT OF SERVILITY TOWARDS THE AMERICAN

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WAY OF LIFE. AMERICANS LISTENING TO TRUDEAU'S SPEECH, DUMAS DECLARES, WOULD HAVE NEEDED AN UNCOMMON AMOUNT OF MASOCHISM NOT TO REACT FAVORABLY TO SUCH FULSOME FLATTERY. AS FOR THE CANADIAN REACTION, DUMAS ASKS, WHY NOT VIEW TRUDEAU'S SPEECH, NOT AS A MASTERPIECE, BUT RATHER AS AN ADAPTATION TO MODERN DAY TASTES OF THE LONG TRADITION OF QUIET DIPLOMACY, IN SUM, SERVILITY WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED THE ATTITUDE OF CANADA WITH REGARD TO ITS POWERFUL NEIGHBOR?

6. IN STARK CONTRAST TO DUMAS EDITORIAL WAS ARTICLE BY DOMINIQUE CLIFT ON OP ED PAGE OF MONTREAL STAR FEBRUARY 26. CLIFT BEGAN ARTICLE BY SAYING THAT CARTER'S ENDORSEMENT OF CANADIAN UNITY AND OF CANADIAN FEDERALISM COULD POSSIBLY BE ONE OF MOST SEVERE BLOWS DEALT SO FAR TO LEVESQUE'S AIMS TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE FOR QUEBEC. CLIFT SAYS THAT PRIVATELY MEMBERS OF QUEBEC GOVERNMENT THINK THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUPPORT FOR CANADIAN FEDERALISM WAS AN UNWARRANTED AND EXCEPTIONAL INTRUSION IN CANADIAN AND QUEBEC AFFAIRS, ALTHOUGH HE ADDS, THEY WOULD BE VERY HESITANT ABOUT EXPRESSING THEIR DISPLEASURE IN

PUBLIC, AS THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO HEIGHTEN U.S. CONCERN INTO OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION.

7. AFTER REVIEWING USUAL REASONS FOR U.S. PREFERENCE FOR CANADIAN UNITY, CLIFT WRITES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ASSERTED THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE U.S. IN THE MAINTENANCE OF CANADIAN FEDERAL SYSTEM, AND AT SMAE TIME HAS WARNED INDIRECTLY OTHER COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT WORLD TO MAINTAIN HANDS-OFF ATTITUDE WITH REGARD TO QUEBEC, A SITUATION WHICH CLIFT CONTENDS COULD BE INTERPRETED AS VEILED PERPETUATION OF MONROE DOCTRINE. ACCORDINGLY, PREMIER LEVESQUE KNOWS THAT HE SHOULD NOT EXPECT A REVIVAL OF FRANCE'S INTEREST IN AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC. AS RESULT OF CARTER'S STATEMENT, CLIFT CONCLUDES THAT QUEBEC PROBLEM HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY CIRCUMSCRIBED TO CANADA AND LEFT TO BE RESOLVED BY CANADIANS ALONE, WITH U.S. LOOKING OVER THEIR SHOULDERS.

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R 012030Z MAR 77
FM AMCONSUL MONTREAL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8640
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL QUEBEC

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8. IN A SEPARATE ARTICLE APPEARING IN MONTREAL STAR MARCH 1, CLIFT SUGGESTS THAT IT IS QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE THAT LEVESQUE SHOULD SEEK TO MINIMIZE IMPORTANCE OF OBVIOUS SUPPORT GIVEN TO CANADIAN FEDERALISM BY PRESIDENT CARTER. CALM AND LOW KEYED REACTION TO WASHINGTON EVENTS, CLIFT SAYS, REFLECTS LEVESQUE'S PERSONAL BELIEF THAT DRIVE FOR INDEPENDENCE MUST FIND ACCEPTANCE IN WASHINGTON MORE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. BY REFUSING TO DRAMATIZE UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDES CONVEYED BY PRESIDENT CARTER, CLIFT BELIEVES THAT LEVESQUE IS FORESTALLING EXPRESSION OF FAIRLY PROMINENT ANTI-U.S. FEELINGS AMONG SIZEABLE PROPORTION OF PQ MEMBERSHIP MADE UP OF INTELLECTUALS, STUDENTS, AND TRADE UNIONISTS, REALIZING THAT DIVISIVENESS WITHIN PARTI QUEBECOIS WOULD BE RESULT IF ATTITUDE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT ON QUEBEC

INDEPENDENCE EVER BECAME POLITICAL ISSUE IN PROVINCE. AT SAME TIME, DIVISIVENESS WOULD MILITATE AGAINST LEVESQUE'S EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING IN U.S., WHICH HE BELIEVES IS ESSENTIAL TO HIS AIMS.

9. TO LARGE EXTENT, CLIFT AND DUMAS PIECES ILLUSTRATE DIFFERENT TREATMENT ACCORDED TRUDEAU'S WASHINGTON FORAY IN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE PRESS; A DIFFERENCE WHICH WAS PERHAPS MOST NOTICEABLE FIRST DAY FOLLOWING CARTER-PHILLIPS INTERVIEW. MONTREAL STAR THAT DAY HAD FRONT PAGE HEADLINE STATING "CARTER BACKS CANADIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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CONFEDERATION". FRANCOPHONE LA PRESSE, HOWEVER, CARRIED INTERVIEW STORY IN FIFTH SECTION OF PAPER UNDER HEADING "CARTER SAYS THAT HE IS NOT WORRIED BY INTERNAL DEBATE WHICH IS TROUBLING CANADA". THROUGHOUT WEEK FRANCOPHONE PRESS IN GENERAL TENDED TO GIVE LESS NEWS PROMINENCE TO EVENTS IN WASHINGTON, WITH REPORTING LESS EMOTIONAL AND LESS INCLINED TO READ INTO STATEMENTS AND REACTIONS SIGNIFICANT DECLARATIONS OF U.S. INTENTIONS. FRANCOPHONE PRESS HAS HOWEVER CARRIED NUMBER OF THOUGHTFUL EDITORIALS (REPORTED EARLIER) RANGING FROM LAUDATORY SUPPORT FOR TRUDEAU'S PERFORMANCE BY LA PRESSE TO MORE CRITICAL, QUALIFIED SUPPORT BY LE DEVOIR'S CLAUDE RYAN. ERICKSEN

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